

Report to Congress on Major Wildlife Trafficking Countries Eliminate, Neutralize, and Disrupt (END) Wildlife Trafficking Act of 2016

P.L. 114-231, Section 201

2020 Report

The Eliminate, Neutralize, and Disrupt (END) Wildlife Trafficking Act (P.L. 114-231; 16 U.S.C. §§ 7601-7644) (the Act) directs the Secretary of State, in consultation with the Secretary of the Interior and the Secretary of Commerce, to submit to Congress a report that lists Focus Countries and Countries of Concern, as defined in the Act.

Wildlife trafficking remains a serious transnational crime that threatens security, economic prosperity, the rule of law, long-standing conservation efforts, and human health. President Trump, in Executive Order 13773 (February 9, 2017), called for a comprehensive and decisive approach to dismantle organized crime syndicates and specifically recognized the connection between wildlife trafficking and transnational criminal organizations.

The Task Force on Wildlife Trafficking (Task Force), co-chaired by the Secretary of State, the Secretary of the Interior, and the Attorney General, brings together 17 federal departments and agencies to implement the National Strategy for Combating Wildlife Trafficking (the “National Strategy”). The U.S. government’s three-pronged approach to combating wildlife trafficking – strengthening law enforcement, reducing demand, and building international cooperation – deprives criminals of a key source of financing, reducing the criminal threat posed to U.S. citizens.

The Task Force’s work to combat wildlife trafficking is making a difference on the ground at home and worldwide. Task Force efforts and activities are better coordinated across the USG: efficiencies are identified and exploited, redundancies eliminated, and resources used more strategically; international outreach continues to expand; and improved intelligence has identified new areas of work. Working in partnership with the private

sector, local communities, and NGOs, the United States has led the way globally, securing agreements and commitments from governments and stakeholders at all levels to take urgent action. Highlights of Task Force efforts are included in the separate Strategic Review, as called for in Section 301(d) of the END Wildlife Trafficking Act.

To improve accountability and reporting on strategy implementation, the Task Force developed 14 indicators for monitoring U.S. government-supported actions to address wildlife trafficking in Focus Countries. Ten indicators measure inputs, outputs, or outcomes of law enforcement capacity building and cooperation efforts, policy reform, and demand reduction actions tailored to each country. Four indicators measure dimensions of how seriously wildlife crime is perceived or addressed in each country. U.S. missions in all original 26 Focus Countries reported indicator data in 2019. Almost every post reported that host countries conducted capacity building for law enforcement in 2019, and over half reported that there were seizures of wildlife or wildlife products attributable to USG engagement. Nearly half of posts described demand-reduction efforts in 2019, representing an increasingly sophisticated and targeted response to the root causes of wildlife trafficking.

Focus Countries^[1]

Methodology for Determining Original 26 Focus Countries

The Department of State worked closely with the other agencies of the Task Force to employ both qualitative and quantitative information to identify Focus Countries and Countries of Concern, as defined in Section 2 of the Act, for the 2017 END Act Report. Technical experts and scientists from Task Force agencies established a process to analyze wildlife trafficking information and gathered a set of relevant and available data. This analysis included evaluation of data drawn from public reporting by USG agencies, international entities such as the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora (CITES), the International Union for the Conservation of Nature, and the UN Office of Drugs and Crime, as well as NGOs such as the Center for Advanced Defense Studies, TRAFFIC, the Environmental Investigation

Agency, and Transparency International. Information from the required national assessments reinforced and augmented our previous findings.

Task Force agencies, including those represented at U.S. missions overseas, reviewed the initial analysis and provided additional information that was often only available locally. These country-specific analyses helped to round out the global data, including by providing information on additional species such as felines, primates, and marine species. Agencies also considered the trajectory of wildlife populations and trafficking's impact on that trajectory, government and private sector efforts to prevent illegal trade, and the presence of legal or poorly regulated domestic markets for species threatened by wildlife trafficking.

The Task Force further evaluated whether governments had recently taken steps to improve legislation, regulations, and/or enforcement and other trends such that the country is stepping up its efforts to combat the illegal trade in wildlife. Subsequent to the initial 26 Focus Countries identified in 2017, the 2019 report listed an additional two Focus Countries.

2020 Focus Countries

The Department of State, in consultation with the Departments of the Interior and Commerce, and with USAID, agreed that all 28 countries and jurisdictions listed as Focus Countries in the 2019 END Act Report should remain. Each country previously listed continues to be a “major source of wildlife trafficking products or their derivatives, a major transit point of wildlife trafficking products or their derivatives, or a major consumer of wildlife trafficking products,” and designation that appears to have contributed to increased attention to combating wildlife trafficking in some Focus Countries.

Consistent with Section 301 of the END Act, U.S. missions in each Focus Country developed a strategic plan, based on the U.S. mission assessment of wildlife trafficking within that country. U.S. agencies used the strategic plans to guide and coordinate U.S. government approaches and responses to the needs and gaps identified in the

assessment. The Task Force co-chairs, along with USAID, developed and distributed templates for both the assessments and Strategic Plans. All Task Force agencies, both at post and in Washington, were invited to contribute to their development. The Task Force reviewed for completeness and consistency, recognizing variability based on location in the supply chain, resources within the U.S. mission, and previous engagement in the issue.

U.S. missions in all Focus Countries have completed their assessments and only the U.S. Mission to Zimbabwe has yet to submit its Strategic Plan. Together these documents provide an overview of the issues related to wildlife trafficking in that country, identify key areas for strategic intervention by the U.S. government, and either establish a new platform or support existing structures within the mission to guide a coordinated, “whole of government” approach to interventions. In some cases, the development of the National Strategy brought together for the first time all U.S. government resources and agencies working in this arena, providing a clear view of the entire landscape of U.S. government support. For some, the assessments and strategies offered the opportunity to elevate wildlife trafficking as an important security and economic issue, not only within the mission but also within the respective host government.

To assess new potential Focus Countries, the Task Force analyzed a compilation of seizure information derived from government data sets, popular media reports, and other sources that reflect reported illegal wildlife trade seizures around the world. The analysis focused on data from 2013 to the present for CITES-listed species. Countries were then ranked by total number of reported seizures, and nine new countries were identified for further review. The Task Force then requested additional information from the U.S. missions in those countries and jurisdictions. The additional information was reviewed to determine whether other countries should be added. For the 2020 Report, no new Focus Countries have been added.

This determination is based on our analysis of the statutory criteria in the END Act and does not reflect a positive or negative judgment of the listed countries or indicate that these countries are not working diligently to combat wildlife trafficking. Indeed, the United States

has longstanding partnerships with many of these countries with respect to combating wildlife trafficking and recognizes the strong political will that already exists in many of these countries to tackle this problem. The Department of State and other Task Force agencies look forward to continuing close and constructive relationships with these countries as we work collaboratively to combat wildlife trafficking.

2020 Focus Country List (in alphabetical order)

Bangladesh

Brazil

Burma

Cambodia

Cameroon

Democratic Republic of the Congo

Gabon

Hong Kong Special Administrative Region

India

Indonesia

Kenya

Laos

Madagascar

Malaysia

Mexico

Mozambique

Nigeria

People's Republic of China

Philippines

Republic of the Congo

South Africa

Tanzania

Thailand

Togo

Uganda

United Arab Emirates

Vietnam

Zimbabwe

Countries of Concern

2020 Countries of Concern

To identify Countries of Concern as directed by Section 201(b) of the Act, the Department of State, in consultation with the Departments of the Interior and Commerce and other agencies of the Task Force, reviewed publicly available information as well as classified material that indicated governments actively engaged in or knowingly profited from the trafficking of endangered or threatened species. In 2020, no Countries of Concern were removed from the list, and Cambodia, Cameroon, and Nigeria were added. This designation does not indicate that all parts of the government are or have been involved in wildlife trafficking, but there are serious concerns that either high-level or systemic government involvement has occurred. The Task Force will, among other things, ensure that U.S. government agencies coordinate efforts among U.S. federal agencies and non-federal partners, to implement the U.S. mission strategic plans developed in accordance with section 301 of the Act, with a view to supporting these countries and their governments to reduce trade in and consumer demand for illegally traded wildlife and wildlife products.

2020 Countries of Concern List (in alphabetical order)

Cambodia

Cameroon

Democratic Republic of the Congo

Laos

Madagascar

Nigeria

[\[1\]](#) Note: This list includes both countries and jurisdictions.

For more information on U.S. Government efforts in combating wildlife trafficking, please see:

[2020 END Wildlife Trafficking Strategic Review](#)